

Unlock the Power of Prefixes!

Prefixes are word parts that come at the beginning of a word. Knowing the meaning of a prefix can help you figure out what the word means.

un tie
not,
opposite of

pre view
before

de frost
do or
make the
opposite of

re read
again

dis agree
not,
opposite of

bi cycle
two

im polite
not,
opposite of

 SCHOLASTIC

Unlock the Power of Prefixes!

Getting Started

What are prefixes? Explain to the class that they are meaningful word parts that come at the beginning of a word. Understanding the meanings of prefixes will help students figure out the meanings of many words that contain the prefix.

Below is a list of several different prefixes. Ask students to brainstorm words that begin with each one.

a- (without)	mis- (wrong/bad)
ab- (away from)	non- (not)
co- (together with)	ob- (against)
ex- (former)	post- (after)
mal- (bad)	sub- (under)

Point out to the class that while most prefixes have only one written form, others change slightly when added to base words that begin with vowel sounds or with specific consonants. For example, in words such as *antacid* and *Antarctic*, *anti-* becomes *ant-*. Similarly, *in-* changes before base words that begin with the letters *b*, *l*, *m*, *p*, and *r*, as in the words *imbalance* and *illegal*.

Most prefixes have only one or two meanings. The meaning of the base word will always change in the same way when these prefixes come at the beginning of certain words. For example, when you add the prefix *in-* (not) to a word, such as *effective*, the word *ineffective* means “not effective.” Similarly, *atypical* means “not typical.” You might want to explain to the class that some prefixes have the same meaning. For example, both *un-* and *in-* can mean “not,” while both *de-* and *dis-* mean “do the opposite of,” as in the words *defrost* and *disagree*.

Word Changing

Provide each student with a copy of the mini-chart on page 37. Go over the seven words that appear on the chart. Discuss how each prefix gives meaning to the base word. Then ask students to think up as many words as they can that begin with that particular prefix. For example, the word *untie* can be broken down into the prefix *un-* and the word *tie*. *Un-* reverses the action of *tying*. Other words beginning with the prefix *un-* include *unleash*, *undo*, and *unveil*. As an extension, with a twist, encourage students to try coming up with other prefixes that can be attached to each of the base words. For example, *untie* might become *retie*; *read*, *misread*; and *preview*, *review*.

Divide the class into two teams. Using the list of words below, ask each group to take turns adding a prefix that creates a meaningful new word. Then have each team try using the word in an imaginative sentence.

happy	hold
school	game
able	live
behave	man
color	pay
open	believable

Word Building

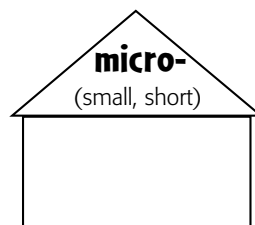
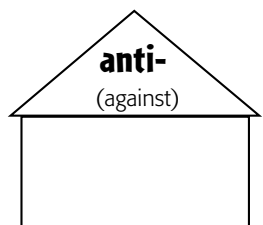
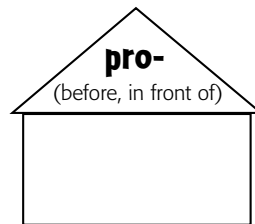
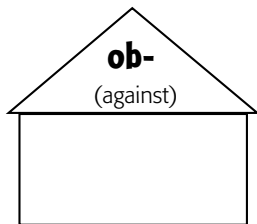
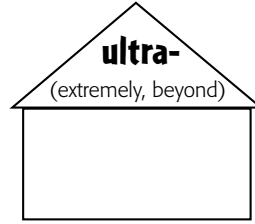
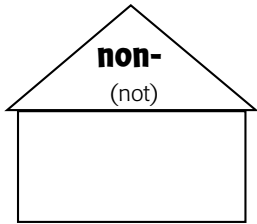
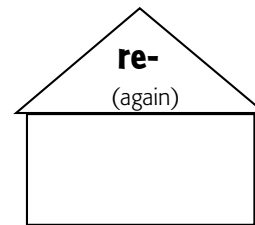
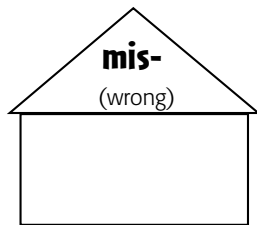
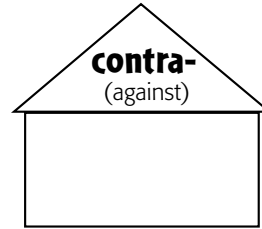
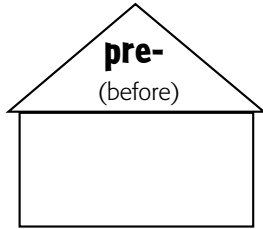
The reproducible on page 39 asks students to use their knowledge of prefixes to “build” new words that begin with a particular prefix. The Word Detective reproducible on page 40 has students break down words into the prefix and root or base word. Students are also asked to explain how the prefix changes the meaning of the word.

Answers: Page 39: Answers will vary. Page 40: **1.** unlucky: not; not lucky **2.** rewind: again; wind again **3.** misplace: wrong; place wrongly **4.** coexist: with; exist with **5.** prehistoric: before; before history **6.** supermarket: higher in quality or quantity; huge market **7.** overachieve: above; achieve more **8.** underweight: below; below weight **9.** abnormal; not; not normal **10.** multilingual: many; fluent in many languages

Name _____ Date _____

Word Building

Add a base word to each house to build a new word. Then write the definition of the word below the house.



Name _____ Date _____



Word Detective

Help our detective discover the prefix and meaning for each word below. Underline the prefix. Then write what it means on the first line. On the second line, write the meaning of the word. Use a dictionary to check your answers.

1. unlucky _____

6. supermarket _____

2. rewind _____

7. overachieve _____

3. misplace _____

8. underweight _____

4. coexist _____

9. abnormal _____

5. prehistoric _____

10. multilingual _____
